



Illinois State Board of Education

November 25, 2013

Guidance Document

Preparing Students for College and Careers by Incorporating the Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards into Educator Preparation Programs

*This document is intended to provide non-regulatory guidance on the subject matter listed above.
For specific questions, please contact the person(s) identified in the document.*

Dr. Christopher Koch, State Superintendent



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Date:

11/26/2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Higher Education Curriculum Developers
Other Interested Parties

FROM: Elizabeth Hanselman, Assistant Superintendent of Specialized Instruction and Nutrition and Wellness Programs
Dr. Jason Helfer, Assistant Superintendent of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness

SUBJECT: Preparing Students for College and Careers by Incorporating the Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards into Educator Preparation Programs

The purpose of this guidance document is to assist higher education curriculum developers with incorporating the Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards into educator preparation programs as now mandated in [Part 25, Section 25.115](#) (Licensure) and highlight some additional resources. This guidance document is intended to be an entrance point for faculty and the strategies within should be adapted to fit the unique context of the institution.

Incorporation of IL Social and Emotional Learning into Educator Preparation Programs

More and more educators are recognizing the value of promoting social emotional learning (SEL) in relation to academic learning; however, they are often left wondering how to incorporate the supporting systems, policies and practices into their existing programming. This highlights the need to develop and/or enhance the pre-service coursework they are exposed to in higher education settings. In response to this need, [Part 25, Section 25.115](#) (Licensure) now requires educator preparation programs to incorporate the Illinois State Board's Social and Emotional Learning Standards into their programming. Requiring incorporation of the standards into educator preparation programs will ensure that teachers, administrators and pupil support personnel have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide instruction specific to social and emotional development; assess students' social and emotional skills; and respond to children with social, emotional, or mental health problems that have an impact on their ability to learn.



Utilizing a backwards design approach, planners of teacher preparation programs can 1) develop a shared understanding of intended social and emotional outcomes for students, 2) extrapolate the knowledge and skills needed by teachers to promote these student outcomes,

and 3) design and implement an integrated approach in which higher education faculty *intentionally* cultivate SEL awareness and competencies among future educators.

Research should provide a basis for identifying how social and emotional *learning* requires socially and emotionally aware *teaching*. Yet without prior precedence, the design of teacher preparation curricula that effectively promote these skill sets may be challenging. Guidance toward a starting point may be useful, as conceptual connections can be made between social and emotional learning and virtually all aspects of teaching of learning.

Below are some basic premises that should guide incorporation of Illinois SEL Standards within educator preparation programming:

1. Programming should address the skills of future teachers, administrators, and school service personnel to effectively promote social and emotional development of students and address any barriers to learning.
2. A variety of venues for incorporation of the Illinois Social and Emotional Standards into educator preparation programs should be utilized. This may include stand-alone courses, infusion into course(s) focused on other content, blended and on-line learning opportunities, and integration into projects, assignments, and student teaching experiences.
3. Faculty members should model SEL competencies and strategies that promote the growth and development of student teachers, administrators, and pupil support personnel.

To begin the process, program designers may consider what relevant social and emotional programming/curricula is already in place as well as how this can be enhanced and/or expanded. See *Appendix A for a summary of considerations regarding the practical incorporation of social and emotional learning in teacher preparation programs.*

Background and Rationale for SEL in Schools

The Illinois State Board of Education's Mission is to provide leadership, assistance, resources, and advocacy so that every student is prepared to succeed in careers and postsecondary education, and share accountability for doing so with districts and schools. This Mission is reflected in the Agency's three goals:

1. Every student will demonstrate academic achievement and be prepared for success after high school.
2. Every student will be supported by highly prepared and effective teachers and school leaders.
3. Every school will offer a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.

Paramount to achieving these goals is the promotion of academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development of students and the cultivation of a thriving learning environment that fosters the growth, dignity and well-being of students, educators, and communities. Research shows that development of these competencies and a safe, caring, responsive, and participatory school climate can result in positive outcomes including:

- Promotion of mental wellness (Payton, et al., 2008; Way, Reddy & Rhodes, 2007);
- Prevention of mental health issues (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak and Hawkins, 2002);
- School connectedness (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002; Shochet, Dadds, Ham and Montague, 2006);
- Adoption, implementation and institutionalization of new practices (Gregory, Henry & Schoeny, 2007);
- Reduction in student absenteeism (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1989);
- Reduction in suspensions (Wu, Pink, Crain, and Moles, 1982); and
- Improved academic outcomes (Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsinger & Dumas, 2003).

The State of Illinois recognizes the impact social and emotional development and a positive learning environment has on student success in academics and life. This is evident in various pieces of legislation that have been enacted over the past decade. To begin with, Section 15(a) of [Public Act 93-0495](#) mandated districts to develop a policy for incorporating social and emotional development into the district's educational program. The policies are to address teaching and assessing social and emotional skills as well as protocols for responding to children with social, emotional, or mental health problems, or a combination of such problems, that impact learning ability.

To support districts with the integration of social and emotional development into their educational programming, the Illinois State Board of Education in 2004 incorporated social and emotional development standards as part of the Illinois Learning Standards. The [IL Social and Emotional Learning Standards](#) describe the social and emotional learning content and skills for students in grades K – 12 and address the following competencies: self awareness and self management skills; social awareness and interpersonal skills; and decision-making skills and responsible behaviors. Each standard includes five benchmark levels that describe what students should know and be able to do in early elementary (grades K - 3), late elementary (grades 4 - 5), middle/junior high (grades 6-8), early high school (grades 9-10), and late high school (grades 11-12).

Relevant Education Initiatives and the SEL Connection

In addition to the Illinois Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Standards, professional frameworks of relevance, such as the research-based Illinois Conditions for Learning Indicators included within Rising Star (Illinois' Statewide System of Support online continuous improvement process system), Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, and Danielson Framework for Teaching, provide guidance regarding best practices that promote positive social and emotional development. *See Appendix B for additional information on how these frameworks promote students' acquisition of the knowledge and skills outlined within the Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards.*

The state-level adoption of Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and English Language/Arts represents enhanced opportunity to cohesively integrate social/emotional and academic learning. While social and emotional competencies are fundamentally required to successfully engage in these and any learning standards, the Common Core State Standards

specify the intentional development of such competencies in relation to subject area content. In addition to content standards, the CCSS prescribe ideal student literacy “capacities” and math “practices” that require personal awareness (similar to SEL Goal 1), collaboration with diverse counterparts (similar to SEL Goal 2), and socially-informed decision-making (similar to SEL Goal 3), among other competencies. See *Appendix C for additional information on the bi-directional relationships between CCSS and the IL Social and Emotional Learning Standards.*

Together, the previously-mentioned professional frameworks and learning standards reflect increasing recognition of the inseparable nature of academic and social/emotional learning in preparation for college and career.

Resources

Comprehensive System of Learning Supports-
www.isbe.net/learningsupports

Conditions for Learning Indicators-
<http://www.isbe.net/learningsupports/html/conditions.htm>

Engagement/Re-engagement-
<http://www.isbe.net/learningsupports/html/engagement.htm>

School Climate-
<http://www.isbe.net/learningsupports/climate/default.htm>

Social and Emotional Learning-
<http://www.isbe.net/learningsupports/html/sel.htm>